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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

*Memorandum*



THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 0600  
9 March 1965

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Office of Current Intelligence  
9 March 1965

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam as of 0600 EST

Internal Developments in South Vietnam

1. Elements of the South Vietnamese military leadership are reported increasingly dissatisfied with General Tran Van (Little) Minh, recently appointed commander-in-chief of the armed forces.

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3. Despite [ ] statements from both the Tam Chau and Tri Quang wings of the Buddhist hierarchy that monk Quang Lien was being ordered to cease his peace movement activities, Lien presented a four-point proposal for ending the war at a public meeting yesterday. Essentially, he called for withdrawal of Viet Cong regular forces to North Vietnam and an end to guerrilla attacks in the South, cessation of US air strikes against the North, withdrawal of US and bloc advisers from both Vietnams, and eventual peaceful reunification.

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4. By leaving implementation of his proposals up to the Saigon and Hanoi governments, Lien may have intended the meeting as his swan song, but the attendant publicity and the presence of another official of the Buddhist Institute at the meeting

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suggest tacit endorsement by the Buddhist hierarchy. A follower of Tri Quang recently stated that he considered the air strikes useful to bring the war to a "decisive phase," and inquired of the Embassy whether diplomatic soundings by foreign capitals had brought any results.

#### Viet Cong Military Activity

5. The Viet Cong are continuing to apply intensive pressure in the countryside, both through armed attacks and widespread harassing actions, minings and sabotage of land communications. Sharp fighting was reported in Binh Dinh Province, about 265 miles northeast of Saigon, where the Communists lost a reported 100 dead in an unsuccessful attack against a government strongpoint on 8 March. According to a late MACV report on the engagement, the South Vietnamese casualties included 30 killed, 18 wounded and 4 missing. Three US advisers were wounded.

6. In Kontum Province, the Viet Cong on 7 March entered two government-controlled hamlets located near the Laotian border. They reportedly kidnapped 87 civilians in addition to capturing several of the defending militia.

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#### Communist Political Developments

8. Moscow is continuing its efforts to fan international concern over the dangers of the Indochina situation. A front page Izvestia commentary on 8 March called the landing of US marines in Vietnam a "new phase in the aggressive policy of the US," showing that Washington has decided to widen the Indochina war. Using unusually strong language,

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Izvestia alleged that this "provocative step trampled on the demands of peaceloving mankind to avert the danger of an explosion of war in the whole world."

9. The latest statements from Peiping and Hanoi reiterate standard formulations on US "aggression" and continue to omit any specific threats of Communist counteraction.

10. Hanoi propaganda has noted the arrival of the second detachment of Marines at Da Nang and charged the US with "barefacedly intensifying" the war. A Peiping People's Daily editorial of 9 March, hailing Ayub's recent visit, was couched in terms designed to imply that the Pakistani President, in endorsing a wide variety of Chinese policy positions, also concurred in the Chinese charge that the US is trying to "extend its aggressive venture and thereby retrieve defeat." Actually the joint communique signed at the conclusion of the top-level Sino-Pakistani talks on 7 March omitted mention of Vietnam.

11. Chinese Communist propagandists also continue to hammer away at the Soviets for police brutality at the student demonstration on 4 March in Moscow. Peiping has publicized a protest by the All-China Students Federation calling on Moscow to "acknowledge its error and apologize."

#### Communist Military Developments

12. There have been no unusual movements of Chinese Communist or North Vietnamese forces detected within the past 24 hours. [REDACTED]

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